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Senator John Cauthorn Bestows Golden Goose Egg On State Education Chief

Christmas Greetings Billed to Taxpayers at the Expense of Schoolchildren

State Senator John Cauthorn, R-Mexico, today awarded Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner D. Kent King a Golden Goose Egg for sending out more than 350 holiday cards last December to fellow and past commissioners and state lawmakers at taxpayers' expense.

"Taxpayers didn't get a card, but they do get a bill for this gem of an idea of more than twelve hundred dollars or by my estimates \$3.42 a card," Cauthorn said. "All the while, school superintendents are jamming the Capitol halls and school boards are meeting late into the night and good teachers are looking for work because money from Jefferson City is coming up short."

Cauthorn notes that the cost of King's good natured but poorly executed card campaign alone would supply four classrooms of grade schoolers with phonics books listed on DESE's own text book list.

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“Or you could buy a school’s worth of pencils, or pay a month’s utility bill,” Cauthorn said. “Season’s greetings are a nice touch, but if Commissioner King wants to put good tidings to paper, he should probably be buying and sending cards with money from his annual salary of \$147,924.”

Cauthorn, chairman of the Senate’s Government Accountability and Fiscal Oversight Committee, formed the Goose Egg awards during the 2003 legislative session. Goose Eggs are akin to former U.S. Senator William Proxmire’s Golden Fleece awards, which he regularly handed out to a myriad of federal government entities displaying a complete lack of fiscal prudence.

Last year’s Goose Egg awardees include the governor, for Enron-style logging of flight time on state-owned planes; the state’s public safety department, for hosting a series of lavish, woefully unattended community meetings; and the office of administration for giving the thumbs-up to capitol restroom renovations amid a third year of challenging budget conditions.

A few egg earners have become multiple winners through diligent disregard for the taxpayers and their hard-earned paychecks.

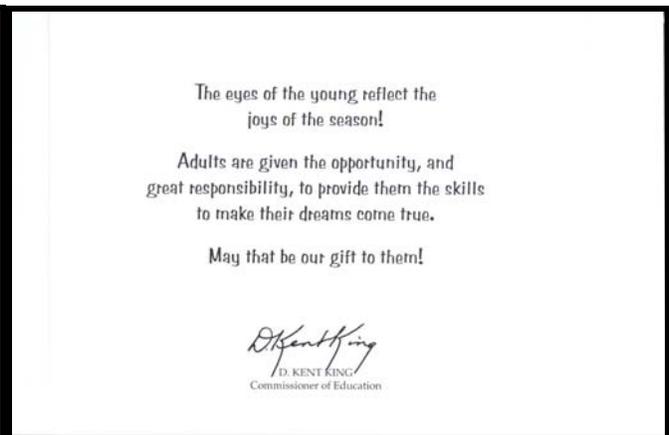
“And it’s very, very possible to have DESE join the ranks of repeat winners,” Cauthorn said, thumbing through an accounting of the agency’s recent expenditures. “Looks like summer school might be in order for education department brass – might even be some there who should repeat a grade. Happy Holidays, indeed...”

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Taxpayer Funded Christmas Card



Front of Card



Inside Message